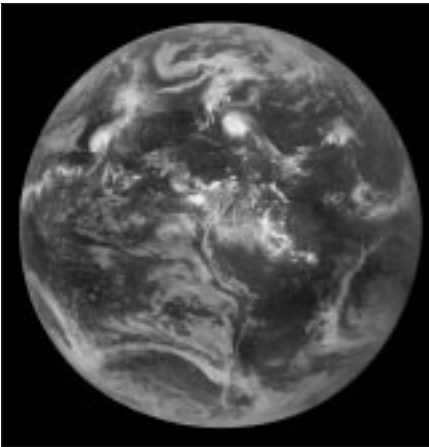


Global Warming: Coming Soon to a Planet Near You



The world is getting warmer. It has warmed by 1 degree Fahrenheit (FAIR in hiyt) over the past 100 years. But why? And how? Well, scientists are not exactly sure. The earth could be getting warmer on its own, without help from people. Many of the world's leading climate scientists think there is another reason for the change in temperature. They think that human activity is helping to make the earth warmer.

Just because the weather has been hot for a month or two does not mean that global warming has arrived. But scientists think that as we use more gasoline and electricity, the earth is going to get warmer. The world's leading climate scientists believe that we know enough about the problem to take some action.

Greenhouse Effect, Climate Change, and Global Warming

The Greenhouse Effect: Scientists are sure about the greenhouse effect. They know that greenhouse gases make the earth warmer. Greenhouse gases make the earth warmer by trapping heat in the atmosphere.

Climate Change: Climate is the long-term average of a region's weather events lumped together. For example, it's possible that a winter day in Buffalo, New York, could be sunny and mild, but the average weather—the climate—tells us that Buffalo's winters will mainly be cold and include snow and rain. Climate change represents a change in these long-term weather patterns. They can become warmer or colder; annual amounts of rainfall or snowfall can increase or decrease.

Global Warming: Global warming refers to an average increase in the earth's temperature, which in turn causes changes in climate. A warmer earth may lead to changes in rainfall patterns, a rise in sea level, and a wide range of impacts on plants, wildlife, and humans. When scientists talk about the issue of climate change, their concern is about global warming caused by human activities.

